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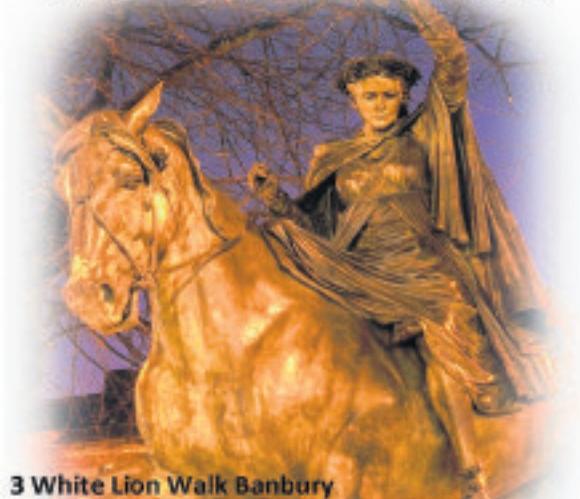
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Cherwell considers compensation bid as 36,000 letters are recalled

# TAX BILLS BLUNDER

COUNCIL bosses are taking legal advice after the company that handles its council tax bills had to recall 36,000 letters.

Cherwell District Council could make a compensation claim after the firm behind its

By Oliver Evans

£705,000-a-year deal – to run its revenues and benefit services – made the error.

About half the district's bills had to be recalled because there was a faulty barcode or incorrect information about names and payments.

Capita – which runs the service for the council – will pick up replacement costs.

Council spokesman Jemma Callow said: "Part way through the mailing process a data fault was identified, which led to a series of errors on the bills.

"These include errors with names, payment and installment figures as well as inactive barcode information. The barcode is required for bill payment at PayPoint and Post Office facilities."

She said: "Those residents who have received incorrect information will have the first bill invalidated and a replacement bill containing the correct information will be issued shortly.

"For those residents who have not currently received a bill, only the correct bill will be issued."

She said the fault lay in printing by Capita and the information held by the council was correct, meaning actual payments would not be affected.

She said: "Cherwell District Council apologises for any inconvenience caused to residents and would like to stress that the costs of re-issuing these bills will be met by the external service provider and not at the expense of the taxpayer."

She said: "With regards to compensation, we are considering our legal options."

Capita took over a range of the council's revenues and benefits "back-office functions" in February 2010. Its contract runs until January 2017.

Sean Woodcock, the Conservative-run council's Labour group spokesman, said: "It doesn't inspire me with confidence."

"We would want to make sure that the council taxpayer doesn't lose out. It is quite a basic error."

He said: "Our view tends to be things are better when they are running in-house."

"Outsourcing tends to be the way things have gone recently. The least we can expect when councils do outsource, is that the company gets it right."

Capita spokesman Caroline Mooney said: "Capita has taken immediate action and revised bills are being sent to customers."

"We would like to apologise for any inconvenience and confusion that has been caused."



LEFT:  
Cherwell's  
Labour  
group  
spokesman  
Sean  
Woodcock

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Grieving daughter plans skydive to raise money for research into disease



Gemma Allen, who is taking part in a skydive in memory of her mother, who died of ovarian cancer

OX65862

# Fundraising salute to a cancer victim

A GRIEVING family is raising awareness — and cash for research — into a "silent killer".

Just before Christmas, Denise McLeese, 63, went to see her doctor because she had pains in her abdomen.

Nine weeks later, just days after doctors confirmed she had ovarian cancer, the grandmother-of-four died.

Next month, her 31-year-old daughter, Gemma Allen, plans to skydive from 13,000ft to raise cash in her mother's name for research into the disease that has left her family devastated.

Mrs Allen, of Russet Road, Ardley, said: "She was like the glue to the family. Now we can see how much we took for granted and how much she held the family together.

"It's hard trying to come to terms with what's happened.

"She would do anything for anybody. She was very homely,

very family orientated."

Mum-of-three Mrs Allen, a call handler for the South Central Ambulance Service, said her mother's GP told her tests showed she had cancer, but a scan and biopsy would confirm it.

She said: "It was confirmed on Monday, February 17, and she died on the following Friday.

"From first symptom to when she died was nine weeks.

"I had never heard of it happening so quickly. The doctors did say it had been growing for a while and it was aggressive."

As well as raising money, Mrs Allen wants to raise awareness of the symptoms of the disease.

She said: "With what happened to mum it has made me scared of how things can change so quickly."

## Symptoms to watch out for

ACCORDING to the NHS symptoms of ovarian cancer are difficult to recognise, especially in the early stages, and can be similar to irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) or pre-menstrual syndrome (PMS).

The main three symptoms are:

- Increased abdominal size and persistent bloating (not bloating that comes and goes)
- Persistent pelvic and abdominal pain
- Difficulty eating and feeling full quickly, or feeling nauseous

"It's known as the silent killer – there's no screening or testing available.

"The symptoms can be just common abdominal pains. It's just scary."

Mrs Allen had decided to do the skydive just after her mum was diagnosed with cancer and had hoped she would be watching her from the ground.

Mrs McLeese leaves husband Dennis, 67, another daughter, Sara McLeese, and an eight-year-old grandson, Finley.

She had retired a few years ago after working for Oxfam for more than 20 years.

Mrs Allen will jump at Hinton Airfield, on Saturday, April 12, and will be cheered on by her husband Kevin, 38, and children Ellie, 11, Keira, nine, and Riley, four.

So far, Mrs Allen has raised almost £1,600.

To sponsor her, view [justgiving.com/jumpaheadofcancer/](http://justgiving.com/jumpaheadofcancer/)

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## Bouncer denies strip club rape claim

A BOUNCER, accused of raping a woman in a Banbury strip club, has denied the complainant was feeling sick when he met her.

Ali Kacani, 32, of Lidsey Road, Banbury, denies two counts of rape and one count of sexual assault, allegedly carried out in the early hours of December 29 last year.

The man is accused of forcing himself on the complainant at around 5am, after she fell asleep in a toilet at the Venus nightclub. But he says they had consensual sex.

On Monday he was cross-examined and asked why he had told the police "it was obvious that she was unwell" in a prepared statement read during his interview.

Kacani replied that this was a "mistake" and earlier said the complainant had been "all over him" and had asked him for sex.

Michael Roques, prosecuting, said: "You understand, don't you, the point that the complainant made to the jury right at the end of her evidence?"

"That any woman who has woken up in a nightclub, who has been sick through alcohol, is not going to want to have sex with somebody."

Kacani replied: "Yes, I do understand that."

The barrister added: "And you understand that it is very important to your case that you don't say she has been sick."

"Yes," replied the witness, but insisted again that his alleged victim had seemed sober when he found her.

The trial continues.

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# World famous musician faces child sex trial

## ■ Barrister asks for delay so client could finish touring

By Ben Wilkinson

A MUSICIAN has appeared at the Old Bailey accused of a string of historic sex crimes.

Philip Pickett, a wind instrument specialist, is charged with a number of offences including three rapes and eight indecent assaults.

The 63-year-old, who lives in Lyneham, is now due to face trial in January next year after his barrister pushed to delay the case so the musician could finish touring.

Jonathan Barnard, defending, told the London court on Monday: "My client is a world famous musician and therefore earns his living on a job-to-job basis and has tours across the globe throughout the autumn – but the season slows down in the new year."

"The Crown doesn't object – the allegations are at the latest 20 years old and the earliest, 40 years old."

Pickett worked as a freelance classical music teacher at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama between 1972 and 1977.

He founded the early music ensembles New London Consort and Musicians of the Globe, and

he has also collaborated with members of the folk rock band Fairport Convention.

He is now facing a series of allegations, including three charges of rape and one of attempted rape between 1974 and 1988. He is also accused of eight counts of indecent assault and one of actual bodily harm.

The nine alleged female victims include a girl who was under 14 at the time of the alleged crime.

Dressed in a dark suit as he stood in the dock at the Old Bailey, Pickett spoke only to confirm his name during the brief preliminary hearing.

He was released on conditional bail, to return to the court on June 30 and enter his pleas to the charges. If he denies them, he will face a seven-to-eight week trial, beginning on January 5 next year.

The court heard Pickett was initially expected to stand trial in October – but the date was pushed back in order to accommodate his tour schedule.

## Helen is voted as the town's top employee

A MANAGER of a photography firm has been voted Banbury's employee of the year. Helen Loggin, of Tudor Photography, took the honour at a ceremony held at Broughton Castle.

Ms Loggin said: "I am passionate about providing outstanding customer care and I enjoy going 'over and above' for our clients."

Tudor director Harry Rhodes added: "Nothing daunts her – from buckets of chemicals and dark rooms to space-age equipment. Our clients love her 'can-do' attitude."

Sales technology firm White Springs was crowned Banbury employer of the year. Chief executive Gary White said: "Winning the award has put an extra spring in our steps."

Team of the year was the London Eye cleaning team from Karcher UK. Marketing manager Phil Springall said: "It is a great honour to win this award. A great deal of effort went into the project, not only during the three weeks in London but also the many months of planning."

The award for outstanding commitment to the community went to the student experience team at Banbury and Bicester College.



Phillip Pickett, who is accused of historic sex crimes

## InBRIEF

### Jail threat for scrapyard man

A SCRAP metal yard worker has avoided jail after a shotgun, stun gun and pepper spray were found in his home. On Friday, Tommy Smith, of Bloxham Road, Bloxham, was handed a 12-month prison sentence, suspended for 18 months, with 120 hours of unpaid work. The 37-year-old admitted two counts of possessing prohibited weapons and one count of having a shotgun without a licence. Police made the discovery after they had raided the Smiths of Bloxham scrapyard on March 29, 2012.

### New NHS role

FORMER Banbury School principal Anita Higham is to lead a public forum for NHS users in the north of the county. The principal from 1985 to 1998 has been elected as chairman of Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group's North Locality Public Forum, which advises GPs on patient priorities. She said: "My main aim is to forge closer links with GP commissioners, to ensure patient views are heard loud and clear when local healthcare is being planned." The GP-led OCCG makes the majority of NHS funding decisions in the county.



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**InBRIEF****Driver held after incident**

■ A DRIVER, aged 23, was arrested after a pedestrian was injured. The 21-year-old woman was hurt on Monday, March 10, in Penrose Drive, Banbury, after she had an argument with the Skoda driver.

The motorist – who police described as Asian, slim and about 6ft tall – is alleged to have driven his car on to the kerb, hitting her leg. She was left with bruising and ligament damage that required treatment at hospital.

The man, who comes from Banbury, was arrested on suspicion of causing actual bodily harm by furious driving. He has since been released on bail until April 22.

Anyone with information should call police on 101.

**Parish meeting**

■ THE next meeting of Adderbury Parish Council will be held on Tuesday. Members will meet at Church House, High Street from 7.30pm. A drop-in surgery, so residents can meet councillors, will be held on Saturday, April 5, at the venue from 11am to noon.

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**Thames Valley Police seize more than £1m of criminal cash**

MORE than £1m of criminal cash has been seized by police in the Thames Valley region so far this financial year.

Since April last year, officers have secured 157 cash detention orders.

In all, £1,009,357 has been seized, with £305,786 already forfeited through 51 court orders.

Det Insp Gavin Tyrrell, head of the Economic Crime Unit, said: "When the police find someone with over £1,000 in cash and we suspect it has come from crime or is going to fund crime, the Proceeds of Crime Act allows us to seize it. This year alone we have seized over £1m."

"Once the cash has been seized, financial investigators in the ECU carry out in-depth investigations into the finances of the individual who had the cash to prove its derivation, and if there is evidence to suggest on the balance of probabilities that it came from crime or was to be used in crime, a forfeiture

order application will be made to a magistrates' court.

"If the magistrates are satisfied that the cash is a product of criminal activity, it will be forfeited."

He added: "This should send a clear warning to the criminals who harm our communities."

# Chef lines up for the TV show, *Great British Menu*

By Pete Hughes

**A PUB chef has stepped back in time to compete in the new series of the BBC's *Great British Menu*.**

Emily Watkins, chef and proprietor of the Kingham Plough, at Kingham, will battle 24 top chefs from across the country for the honour of cooking a WWI-themed banquet to honour veterans on D-Day.

The series, which begins on Monday, April 7, has already been filmed, but competitors

## ■ Cooking to salute the D-Day veterans

are sworn to secrecy as to the outcome.

Ms Watkins, who has run the pub with her husband, Miles Lampson, for seven years, said it was an honour to compete in the show for a second time.

In last year's Comic Relief-themed show, she made it to the second round, where she was let down by her green eggs and ham starter.

She said the big lesson she learned from that was "not to be pregnant when you're doing

it". She has since given birth to her third child, Wilbur, who joins brother Alfie, four, and sister Grace, three.

Ms Watkins, 35, said: "It is an incredibly high pressured competition. Aside from the fact it is televised, to be cooking against chefs of such high calibre is daunting. Throw into that the veteran judges and, of course, wanting to get through to the final banquet.

"But I loved every minute of it. There were definitely some

low points as well as the highs.

"This year's brief – to honour the war veterans for the 70th anniversary of D-Day – was fantastic and really suited to us at the Kingham Plough.

"I threw everything into the competition and tasted some delicious food from the other chefs. I think it should be a fantastic series."

Now, in its ninth series, the *Great British Menu* gets about two million viewers.

This year's competitors have



**Great British Menu**  
contestant  
Emily Watkins  
at the  
Kingham Plough

OX65977

## Alert after distraction theft

AN elderly woman was distracted while her credit cards were stolen from her purse in Drayton.

The thieves then used the card to withdraw money from a cash machine.

Police believe they followed her to a supermarket in Swan Close, Banbury, to discover her PIN when she used a card to pay for shopping.

They approached her later as she was walking in Stratford Road, Drayton. A woman asked her for directions to Horton Hospital and two men showed her a map.

Police say this was a distraction as they stole the cards and then withdrew a large amount of money.

PC Kevin Yeoman said: "I would like to remind residents to be on their guard and remain extra vigilant when out shopping. It is very important to be careful when entering PIN numbers into devices during transactions and ensure that no one around you is able to easily read your PIN number."

Anyone with information should contact the police via the non-emergency 101 number.

## Long waits at county A&Es

SOME 272 people had to wait more than four hours to be admitted, transferred or discharged at county A&E departments in the week to Sunday, March 9, new figures show.

Some 2,321 attended A&E at Banbury's Horton General and Oxford's John Radcliffe Hospital, of which 633 were admitted as the most serious emergencies.

It means 88.3 per cent were seen within four hours, against a target of 95 per cent at the hospitals, run by Oxford University Hospitals NHS Trust.

■ Police officer accessed force's computer for victims' details

# Judge jails former PC over accidents scam

A CORRUPT police officer, who stole and sold the contact details of car crash victims, has been jailed, leaving Thames Valley Police facing a fine of up to £500,000.

On Wednesday of last week, former Oxford-based PC Sugra Hanif, was sentenced to three-and-a-half years behind bars after being found guilty of conspiring to commit misconduct in public office.

Judge Andrew Barnett told the 27-year-old: "You are a disgrace to the uniform you once wore."

And he added: "The reputation of Thames Valley Police has been tarnished by your actions."

The force could now be fined up to £500,000 by the Information Commissioner's Office and faces further financial claims from 5,000 people whose details were potentially breached, Winchester Crown Court heard.

But officials from the ICO said there were no ongoing enquiries into the case.

Prosecutor Peter Asteris told the hearing: "The actual size of the fine they face is unknown because the level and amount of data obtained is unprecedented. However, it could be up to £500,000."

**By Ben Wilkinson**

for a former police officer."

But Judge Barnett, sentencing, told Hanif: "A deterrent sentence must be set and an example must be made."

Hanif has been sacked from the force following her conviction.

Det Chief Supt Tim De Meyer, head of professional standards at the force, said: "It is vital that people have complete trust in Thames Valley Police and its officers. We are pleased that justice has been done."

Clive Benson, Thames Valley Police Federation secretary, said: "There is a degree of trust that officers are expected to uphold in office. Any breach of that trust results in sanction and it has been reflected in the sentence by the court."

"What she did was totally unacceptable and we cannot have police officers who do that."

A confiscation hearing will be heard at a later date when the prosecution will try to reclaim the money made by Hanif and Khan.

An Information Commissioner's Office spokesman said: "One of the conditions for our office issuing a penalty is that the breach must either



LEFT:  
Former  
Police  
Constable  
Sugra  
Hanif, who  
was jailed  
for three-  
and-a-half  
years

have been deliberate, or the organisation must have known, or ought to have known, that there was a risk that a contravention would occur and failed to take reasonable steps to prevent it."

Khan, of Ivy Road, Handsworth, Birmingham, was jailed for three years after he was also found guilty of conspiring to commit misconduct in a public office.

His wife, Paramjeet Kaur, 26, from Birmingham, was acquitted of the crime.

## Cloudy2Clear Windows – Service With A Smile!

It's been a crazy few months for Cloudy2Clear Windows. The company which specialises in repairing windows which are steamed up, broken or damaged by replacing the panes – not the frames has grown rapidly as homeowners take advantage of their services.

Managing Director Trevor Skidmore feels that it's all about service. "Our product is simple. If your double glazing is misted up we can replace the glass at a fraction of the cost of a new window, in any type of frame, and with a new 5 year guarantee. But it's not just about saving people money, although

that obviously helps. Many tradespeople have struggled since last year and I honestly feel that during the good times a minority perhaps didn't focus on customer care as much as they should have done. We make sure we turn up when we say we will, do the job the customer requires and leave their house as clean as a whistle. I often get comments back from customers on how they really didn't expect that sort of service which, in a way, is very sad for the service industry as a whole."

Cloudy2Clear service the Oxford, Banbury & Abingdon areas and Trevor is finding that his approach is a major factor

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## InBRIEF

### Planners back new care home

■ PLANS for a new care home in Adderbury have been approved by Cherwell District Council. Leonard Cheshire Disability and Gracewell Properties is planning to build a 60-bedroom elderly nursing home and elderly care facility on land north of Greenhill and Adderbury Bowls Club. The care home would provide ensuite bedrooms with shared lounge, dining, bathing and activity facilities. The project could create 80 jobs.

● Plans have also been approved for a new care home, providing 73 bedrooms and up to 80 new jobs, on land between The Leys and North Bar Place in Banbury.

### Sixties night

■ A SIXTIES night, with hit tunes and dance routines, will take place at Banbury Town Hall later this month. There will be live music from the Lee Malvern Four and the Blast From The Past Road Show disco provided by Keith Fraser of Horton Hospital Radio. The event on Saturday, March 29, will raise funds for the town mayor Nicholas Turner's charity of the year, Radio Horton. There will be a raffle on the night at the event, which starts at 7.30pm and runs to 10.45pm. Tickets cost £10.

## InCOURT

### Verdicts from magistrates courts around the county

Housing in Bretch Hill, Banbury, on December 1. Given a 12-month conditional discharge and told to pay £300 compensation, a £15 victims' surcharge and £85 costs.

■ DEAN BLAKE, 24, of Horsefair, Chipping Norton admitted using threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour with intent to cause unknown harassment, alarm or distress in High Street, Oxford, on February 16. Fined £100, a £20 victims' surcharge, and £85 costs.

■ LEE BROMLEY, 37, of Thyme Close, Banbury, admitted being in charge of a dog which caused an injury in a private place in Thyme Close, Banbury, on November 27. Order made requiring the dog be kept securely fitted with a muzzle, under control by its owner and on a lead or it will be destroyed. Told to pay £100 compensation and £40 costs.

■ DECLAN ALLEN, 20, of Bretch Hill, Banbury, admitted assaulting a woman by beating her in Banbury on February 11. Fined £225 and ordered to pay a £23 victims' surcharge and £85 costs.

■ MARCIN PLUTA, 29, of The Causeway, Banbury, admitted two counts of theft from a motor vehicle on January 30 in Thorpe Way, Banbury, when he stole 15 litres of diesel, and on January 22, in Thorpe Way, Banbury, when he also stole diesel. Also admitted committing a further offence during the period of a suspended sentence made on April 18 for racially or religiously aggravated common assault. Community order made with 120 hours of unpaid work and told to pay a £60 victims' surcharge and £85 costs.

■ RICHARD O'ROURKE, 41, of Rotary Way, Banbury, admitted making off without payment on July 13 at Barwood Court, Rotary Way, Banbury, to avoid paying £39.55 for a taxi journey. Community order made with an activity requirement, a supervision requirement and 150 hours of unpaid work. Also told to pay £39.55 compensation, a £60 victims' surcharge and £100 costs.

■ RICKY BRASH, 27, of Middleton Road, Banbury, admitted causing criminal damage to two internal doors and a front door lock belonging to Sanctuary

**InBRIEF****Punctual rail firm praised**

■ CHILTERN Railways was the country's most punctual rail operator in February, according to research released by Network Rail. The figures show 86.1 per cent of Chiltern Railways trains were on time between February 2 and March 1, against a national average of 66.3 per cent. Andrew Munden, operations and safety director at Chiltern Railways said: "Whilst it is a great achievement, it is important not to be complacent and we are continuing to look at ways to improve so that our passengers have the best travel experience possible."

**Final salute to war victim**

■ A SOLDIER from the Oxford and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry regiment, who died in the First World War, will be reburied in a commemorative ceremony later this year. The soldier, who has not yet been named, is one of a number of soldiers being reinterred this year in ceremonies by the Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre. The time and location of the ceremony have yet to be announced.

■ Arrival leads to the creation of 15 jobs

# Transport firm expands with a £1.5m move

By Andrew Smith

**FIFTEEN** jobs have been created after a transport company opened a new £1.5m depot.

Reason Transport has moved into Heyford Park, at Upper Heyford, and bosses say more jobs are likely to be created there later this year.

Principal Alan Reason said: "I'm delighted that the investment allows us to offer enhanced services to existing customers, as well as extending our expertise to a new audience."

Reason Transport has been established for more than 60 years and is based in Coventry.

The move to Upper Heyford extends the company's reach across Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire.

The business has taken a 20,000 sq ft warehouse and has also invested in 11 new collection and delivery vehicles.

The enhanced services include increased secure storage, more efficient haulage routes for faster deliveries and an inter-depot service.



Alan Reason

## Candidates withdraw in race for seat

IT'S back to the drawing board for the Banbury constituency Labour Party after two of its three potential candidates for the next General Election withdrew.

The trio were due to take part in hustings earlier this month, so party members could select a candidate to fight for the seat of sitting Conservative MP Sir Tony Baldry.

But before the decision could be made, one candidate withdrew due to work commitments, and then a second female candidate also stepped down for personal reasons.

The Labour group did not release the names of the three candidates.

Organisers said they decided to postpone selection as a single candidate would not give members an open choice.

Party chairman Henry Goodman said: "The selection committee very much regret having to take this decision and appreciate that members will be disappointed and that several will have been inconvenienced."

"However, they feel that there was no other satisfactory alternative."

## Town hall reopens

AN open day was staged at the newly refurbished Banbury Town Hall on Saturday.

It opened from 10am to 5pm following the completion of a £500,000 refurbishment.

Banbury Town Council hopes to begin using the venue for weddings and receptions.



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■ Telephone callers to try to motivate patients to beat the bulge

# Ringing the changes to help get the inactive fit



Dr Paul Roblin, chief executive of the British Medical Association's Oxfordshire committee

THE county's most inactive people will be given motivational phone calls urging them to exercise more – all part of a scheme using Lottery cash.

People referred to Oxfordshire Sports Partnership will get the calls to boost their motivation and confidence, health bosses say.

It is the latest bid to battle the bulge – after figures unveiled for the first time last month showed six in ten county residents were overweight or obese.

Table tennis, walking or exercise for mums with

By Oliver Evans

pushchairs were among the new sessions being suggested for people who do no regular exercise.

And the new pilot scheme is giving professionals, like GPs, £30 for each person they refer who make "positive changes" within 12 weeks.

Partnership managing director Chris Freeman said the new work "would target the county's most inactive people".

He added: "We have trained motivational interviewers who

will spend time on the phone, helping to increase people's motivation and confidence to do more."

The four interviewers would offer a "guiding approach rather than a 'telling' approach", the partnership said, to "help the person find their own solutions to change their behaviour".

Exact details of what this could involve have not been revealed, nor is it clear how often people will receive such phone calls.

Yet so far 45 people have been referred.

The programme – backed by a £482,559 Lottery grant – is part

of the county GO Active sports scheme of activities, set up in 2009. Last month, it was revealed that NHS and council bosses spent about £700,000 sending more than 12,000 overweight and obese residents to diet groups.

Dr Paul Roblin, of the British Medical Association's Oxfordshire local medical committee, backed the new phone call scheme.

But he questioned if GPs should be paid for referrals, adding: "If a patient wants to refer themselves, that is a test of their motivation to deal with the problem."

For details, visit [getoxfordshireactive.org](http://getoxfordshireactive.org) or call 01865 252 676. ● Sport England surveys found that the number of Oxfordshire people exercising at least three times a week rose from 26 per cent to 30 per cent from 2008 to 2013. But health leaders are concerned that it also found about one in five do less than 30 minutes moderate physical activity a week.

## InBRIEF

Brewery in toast to MP

■ MP Sir Tony Baldry has been praised for his work in securing last year's cut in beer duty by the Hook Norton Brewery. MD James Clark presented Sir Tony with a Beer Champion award at the Ye Olde Reindeer Inn, Banbury. Mike Benner, from the Campaign for Real Ale, said: "This reward recognises Sir Tony for his invaluable support in the campaign to scrap the beer duty escalator. He really helped in drawing attention to the harm caused by tax increases totalling 42 per cent over four years."

## Landfill blow

■ THE amount of waste going into landfill in Cherwell has breached a council target – because an Environment Agency ruling from 2013 required street sweepings to go to landfill because of concerns about toxicity. The district council said Oxfordshire County Council was to "seek alternative arrangements for these to be recycled".

## County council forced to take obese children into care

THREE Oxfordshire children under 16 had to be taken into care over the last five years because they were morbidly obese, according to new figures.

After obtaining the statistics under Freedom of Information laws, the *Daily Mirror* newspaper reported that 74

children had been placed in care in England, Scotland and Wales in that period. The newspaper approached the 206 local authorities in Britain with responsibility for child protection.

It found that between 26 and 46 morbidly obese children were taken

into care by social services from the 128 authorities that provided proper responses.

After assessing the potential figure from remaining councils, the total number could be as many as 74 according to the *Daily Mirror*.

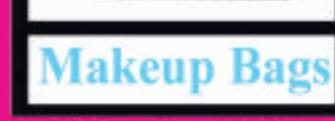
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Laura Freeth, of the befriending charity OxBEL

OX65857

# Lifting an age-old taboo with series of 'death cafes'

A NATIONWIDE movement of "death cafés", which aims to break taboos over the subject of dying, is to hold a series of events in Oxfordshire.

The death café movement started in London in 2011 and has since inspired 588 events around the world.

People gather at cafés to enjoy tea and cake while sharing their thoughts, feelings and fears about death.

They are particularly aimed at encouraging people to talk to their relatives about their wills and funeral wishes.

Charity Befriending for Life (OxBEL), which works with people with life-limiting illnesses, will host cafés in Banbury and Chipping Norton, as well as Faringdon, Eynsham, Oxford, Abingdon and Thame.

Joan Gardner, OxBEL co-

**By Debbie Waite**

ordinator for north and west Oxfordshire, said: "OxBEL held its first death café in May 2013 and the response was overwhelming.

"We've since had hundreds of conversations with individuals and groups about the value of talking about what can be a very difficult, frightening subject.

"Society doesn't really allow people to talk about this taboo subject.

"So this is what a death café does. It offers us all a rare opportunity to share our feelings and experiences of death."

Facilitator Laura Freeth said: "The events last year attracted people of all ages, including people in their 40s and 50s who wanted to broach the subject of their death, sensitively, with their children.

"The cafés are not at all morbid. In fact, there is often laughter and we heard many uplifting stories.

"We have also been encouraged that people who attended last year have signed up this year."

The next event at 5 White Lion Walk, Banbury, will be held on Thursday, March 27, from 11am to 1pm. To book, call 01295 278040.

Other events include one Abingdon, on Saturday, May 17, from 10am to noon, at St Edmund House, 39 West St Helen Street, Abingdon. To book call 01235 849427.

For more details visit [oxbel.org.uk](http://oxbel.org.uk).

- Death cafés were pioneered by Swiss sociologist Bernard Crettaz in 2004.

- They were introduced to the UK by Jon Underwood, founder of the social enterprise Impermanence in 2011.

## Residents snap up recycling bins in sale

CHERWELL residents have taken advantage of cut-price recycling bins, buying nearly 1,500 in just two months.

Cherwell District Council sold enough recycling bins during its winter bin sale to fill three-and-a-half Olympic-sized swimming pools with waste.

Throughout December 2013 and January 2014, the council reduced the cost of its blue recycling and brown food and garden waste bins to just £10 in an effort to

encourage people to recycle. Residents bought 1,156 new blue bins and 327 brown bins – six times as many bins compared to the same period the previous year.

Nigel Morris, lead member for clean and green, said: "By boosting our recycling levels, we will increase income to the council and reduce the amount we have to pay to send waste to landfill, thus helping to prevent an increase in council tax."

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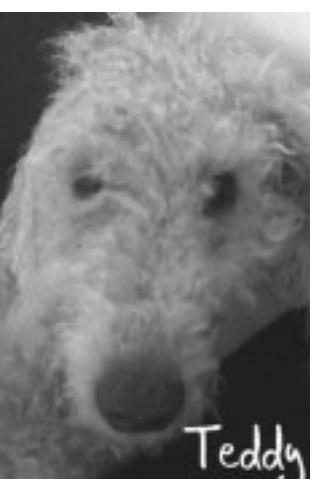
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## Festival date for Battle of the Bands winner



Hannah Mitchell, Katie Ware and Emma Pascoe, who make up Revival, pictured with Cornbury Festival director Hugh Phillimore

### Panto fun for drama group

ST JOHN'S drama group in Banbury are to present a series of performances of *Cinderella* this week.

The show, written by Stuart Arden and Bob Heather, features music and dancing from the cast at St John's RC Primary School. Performances will take place tonight and will continue until Saturday.

Curtain up is at 7.30pm and tickets cost £6 for adults or £4 for concessions.

For further details see: [stjohnsdramagroup.ticketsource.co.uk](http://stjohnsdramagroup.ticketsource.co.uk)



### Auditions planned

BANBURY Cross Players are preparing to stage their open auditions for their forthcoming production of Shelagh Stephenson's Olivier Award winning play *The Memory of Water*.

This profound, exciting and funny play is a deeply felt, sharp and witty portrait of family life.

It focuses on how three sisters deal with the death of their mother.

Each have different memories of the same events causing them to bicker about whose memories are true.

After years of separation, many of the sisters' hidden lies and self-betrayals reach the surface.

The Players plan to hold an audition for their own members on Tuesday, March 25, followed on Thursday, March 27, with an open audition. Both will be held at The Mill Arts Centre, Spiceball Park, Banbury, at 8pm.

The available roles include: Violet, 40s mother with Alzheimer's; Catherine, 20 to 30, youngest sister, baby of the family; Mary, 30 to 40, middle sister, doctor; Teresa, 30 to 40, eldest sister; Mike 40s, TV doctor, married, in an affair with Mary; Frank, 30 to 40, Teresa's second husband, met via dating agency.

Details: [banburycrossplayers.co.uk](http://banburycrossplayers.co.uk)

THREE-piece girl band *Revival* triumphed at the Chipping Norton Battle of the Bands last Thursday, winning the chance to perform at this year's Cornbury Music Festival – to be staged at Great Tew on the first weekend of July.

Hannah Mitchell, 15, Katie Ware, 14, and Emma Pascoe, 14, impressed the judges with their upbeat pop covers, outstanding talent and joyful performance.

And they were a popular choice with the audience at Chipping Norton School, who roared their approval.

According to festival director Hugh Phillimore, the decision was unanimous.

He said: "Revival were the best rehearsed, most fun and, for me, are

exactly the sound of the summer that the Cornbury Music Festival audience will appreciate.

"This is the sixth year we've been working with Chipping Norton School, supporting the Battle of The Bands, offering work experience to students and awarding music prizes for the feeder primary schools.

"We very much appreciate the support we, too, have had from the local community over the years and we now feel truly embedded in the local culture."

Chipping Norton School's Jazz Band will also be performing at the Cornbury Music Festival, which runs from July 4 to 6.

Details: [www.cornburyfestival.com](http://www.cornburyfestival.com)

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\* Source: Continental Research 2008; 41% respondents stated they used local media as a source of information when looking to buy a car from a private seller. Local media = newspaper websites and supplements.



# Irish backdrop to comic tale of stag party scrapes

**THE STAG** (15, 94 mins)

Comedy/Drama/Romance. Andrew Scott, Hugh O'Conor, Peter McDonald, Brian Gleeson, Andrew Bennett, Michael Legge, Amy Huberman. Director: John Butler.

**B**oys will be buffoons in John Butler's raucous comedy about male friends who gets into scrapes during a stag weekend in rural Ireland.

Far gentler than *The Hangover* but peppered with similar moments of outrageous misfortune, *The Stag* chugs along pleasantly and elicits wry smiles as the characters find themselves stark naked in a wood with only makeshift squirrel skin thongs to spare their blushes.

Butler's script, co-written by actor Peter McDonald, trades in broad stereotypes and never threatens to shatter our preconceptions.

Thus the wimp who claims "I can't abide U2" at the beginning of the film weeps openly to a ballad by Bono and co in the closing frames, and a domineering brother-in-law reveals chinks in his armour to remind us that bullies have hearts too.

It's a blessing that the script dodges the outlandish, gross-out humour that seems to be the stock-in-trade of American comedies about friendship and male bonding.

So, while there are some bodily fluids, they remain safely off camera, and the two gay characters aren't simply targets for a barrage of homophobia.

Groom-to-be Fionnan (Hugh

O'Conor) is a self-confessed metrosexual, who would rather attend a hen party with his beautiful fiancee Ruth (Amy Huberman) than suffer the horrors of a stag do.

He is heavily involved in preparations for the big day and lovingly constructs a miniature representation of his dream reception room.

"Very few grooms make doll's houses," observes the wedding planner tartly.

"It's a diorama," he protests. At the behest of his bride-to-be, Fionnan allows best man Davin (Andrew Scott) to organise a lads-only weekend.

They settle on a rugged camping expedition with good mate Simon (Brian Gleeson) and long-term couple Big Kevin (Andrew Bennett) and Little Kevin (Michael Legge).

Ruth is keen for Fionnan to bond with her fearsome older brother, nicknamed The Machine (Peter McDonald), and assumes her sibling will be invited on this outdoors retreat.

Davin conveniently forgets to tell The Machine, but the bullish brother-in-law is tipped off and he gatecrashes the stag party.

Fragile bonds of friendship are tested to the limit as Fionnan and co withstand a barrage of insults from The Machine, trekking from disaster to despair via a near-death experience with a gun-toting farmer.

At 94 minutes, *The Stag* doesn't outstay its welcome but saying a resounding "I do" to Butler's uneven film is tricky.



A scene from  
*The Stag* – a  
raucous  
comedy from  
John Butler

Picture: PA  
Photo/Arrow  
Films

The cast inhabit roles with warmth and gusto and the rapport between Scott and O'Conor papers over some of the cracks.

McDonald's altercation with an electric fence provides a comic highpoint but his character's persistent nagging wears thin.

A cosy coda tries unsuccessfully to convince us that The Machine's heavy-handed tactics were all designed to make Fionnan and co better men.

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## United tumble down the table as they fall to their eighth defeat in a row

# Banbury crash again



New Banbury keeper Scott Dutton

**BANBURY** United's woes in the Calor League's Premier Division continued as they crashed to their eighth defeat in a row on Saturday.

In that run, Banbury have conceded 38 goals which has seen them drop like a stone in the table.

It was the Puritans' heaviest home defeat for nearly 50 years.

The last time it happened was on August 29, 1964, when they lost 7-0 to Kidderminster Harriers.

To make matters worse, they also had Dave Baker sent off.

**Banbury United** 0  
**Hungerford Town** 7  
(Draycott 1, 12, 65, Hopper 49, 72, Brown 84, Goodger 87)

Banbury went a goal down within a minute when former Didcot Town striker Mark Draycott fired in.

He doubled Hungerford's lead 11 minutes later.

Five minutes before the break, Banbury were reduced to ten men when Baker was sent off for bringing down Stefan Brown.

However, Scott Dutton, making his debut on loan from Wolves, saved Draycott's resulting penalty.

Luke Hopper made it 3-0 in the second half, before Draycott completed his hat-trick midway through the half.

Hopper got his second, before goals from Brown and Harry Goodger sealed a wretched day for Edwin Stein's side.

**Banbury Utd:** Dutton, Cray, Stratford, Isaac (Dias 82), Martin (Green 61), Baker, Collins, Obeng, Skendi, Simpson (Tappin 46), Talabi. Subs not used: Bevis, Anomneze.

Attendance: 228.

## Latest tables

CALOR LEAGUE Premier Division								
	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts	
Hemel Hempstead	36	27	4	5	112	29	85	
Chesham Utd	36	25	4	7	90	41	79	
St Albans City	37	21	8	8	76	44	71	
Cambridge City	34	20	6	8	71	42	66	
Stourbridge	35	19	5	11	92	45	62	
Bideford	37	17	11	9	66	47	62	
'Poole Tn	28	16	9	3	51	27	54	
Hungerford Tn	32	16	5	11	59	34	53	
Corby Tn	33	15	6	12	54	49	51	
Redditch Utd	35	15	3	17	49	71	48	
Hitchin Tn	34	13	8	13	54	41	47	
Arlesey Tn	37	13	8	16	57	63	47	
Weymouth	33	14	4	15	51	62	46	
Biggleswade	31	10	13	9	52	40	43	
'Brent Neas Tn	36	12	7	13	59	61	43	
Frocester Tn	35	12	7	16	44	59	43	
Buntember	35	11	8	16	49	66	41	
<b>Banbury Utd</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>40</b>	
Truro City	35	10	9	16	48	70	39	
Chippenham	35	11	5	19	47	71	38	
AFC Totton	34	6	4	24	43	101	22	
Bashley	32	4	3	25	27	87	15	
Bedford Tn	36	3	5	28	38	106	14	

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## READER OFFER



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### ARIES Mar 21-Apr 19

Nothing can be achieved by saying, 'I can't'. When you are on form you are one of the most successful signs in the zodiac, so look in the mirror now and say the words, 'I can'. The world is your oyster if you get yourself into the right state of mind my friend. Dress better this week, you're giving the wrong impression to a powerful face. Ring now for a revelation on relationships.

**0906 585 4360**

### LIBRA Sep 23-Oct 22

Love yourself and love life and you will find love with the right person. You have to like yourself first my friend, which is something you're only just beginning to do. Family want to give you an ultimatum and it's time you let them know you can no longer be emotionally manipulated. Give me a ring now to hear which sign is worth meeting half way with your differences.

**0906 585 4366**

### TAURUS Apr 20-May 20

This is a week in which you find out who your true friends are. I actually think you're going to be in for quite a surprise when you find out who does and doesn't support you my friend. The good thing to come out of this of course is that you will see where your energies can now be better spent. Exams and tests taken this week go exceptionally well. Phone me, we need to talk about family.

**0906 585 4361**

### SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 21

The best times in life this week will require you to go out of your way and perhaps even travel long distances. Life starts to feel more interesting again and you start to feel happy about who you are and where you're going. A perfect week to apply for a new job or to make changes to an existing one. Give me a call to hear why it's worth cancelling what you don't want for this week.

**0906 585 4366**

### GEMINI May 21-Jun 20

I love this time of year and so should you as it makes you so much more psychic and open to being true to who you really are. Don't fall out with younger faces though, just because they have a different view from you. You'd be far better to let them make their own mistakes and then they'll be unable to place the blame with you. Ruthless but true this week. Ring now for a financial opportunity.

**0906 585 4362**

### SAGITTARIUS Nov 22-Dec 21

Your element of fire is pushing you to say things which would be better left unsaid. Try to remember this week that if you have nothing nice to say then say nothing at all. An important relationship could depend on it. Then again, you could always try talking about the issue that's really on your mind. Do it by Thursday and you'll find a solution too! Ring now for help and advice.

**0906 585 4367**

### CANCER Jun 21-Jul 20

Things you hear about people you know this week may be upsetting for you but will also put a lot of things into place about feelings you've had over the last six weeks. House moves and changes to the way you live are also evident now. You may not have noticed yet, but you're in control of your own destiny again. Don't let anyone or anything change this please. Ring now for a full reading.

**0906 585 4362**

### CAPRICORN Dec 22-Jan 19

Mars makes it hard for you to choose between something or someone and you're in danger of turning to those who you would usually never listen to for advice on your future. At the end of the day, you're the one who has to live your life and live with the choices you make. Be proud of who you are, I am proud of you dear Capricorn. Ring now to hear speaking from your heart brings miracles.

**0906 585 4368**

### GEMINI May 21-Jun 20

Things you hear about people you know this week may be upsetting for you but will also put a lot of things into place about feelings you've had over the last six weeks. House moves and changes to the way you live are also evident now. You may not have noticed yet, but you're in control of your own destiny again. Don't let anyone or anything change this please. Ring now for a full reading.

**0906 585 4363**

### AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 18

Astrology is the mirror image of life upon this planet using the patterning of the planets in our solar system. With that Venus has planned you're in for a treat if you give in to your stars this weekend. Use Thursday and Friday to sort out financial disagreements or worries to your advantage. Give me a ring to hear how Mercury can sort out a family rift.

**0906 585 4369**

### LEO Jul 23-Aug 22

You seem to be a little lost in your work this week and this could have a lot to do with the fact that many of you Leos are not in the careers you first hoped for. What's stopping you from going for your dreams though? Only you, as astrologically you can have your cake and eat it this month, so start making enquiries. Ring now to hear how travel ensures a good love life.

**0906 585 4364**

### PISCES Feb 19-Mar 20

This week sees you feeling full of solar energy. Not surprising since the Sun is in your sign and assuring you how very special you are. Family seem to think they know what's best for you and recent disagreements come to a head this week. Ensure you keep manners as well as facts to the fore if you want to come out on top of such confrontations. Ring now for support and guidance.

**0906 585 4370**

### VIRGO Aug 23-Sep 22

Others want you to be involved in the rat race, or rather 'their' rat race and yet you just want some peace and quiet to take in all that is going on in your mind and heart. Put your foot down Virgo, for by the end of this month it's a life change you'll want, not just tweaks and fine tuning. Could it be that others know you're planning to do something without them? Ring now for a clearer view.

**0906 585 4365**

### PISCES Feb 19-Mar 20

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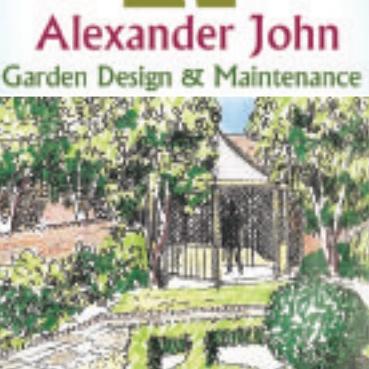
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2001 Y FORD MONDEO 1.8 LX,	4 Door Saloon Met silver/green, Remote central locking, Electric windows, Aircon, PAS, Nice condition for the year, Sold with a new MOT and a full service the car has no cam belt, HPI clear .....	£1,195

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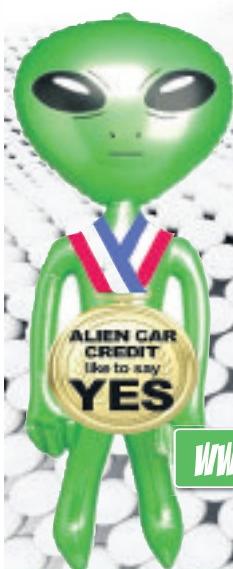
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**10** MOTORS



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